







The Hon^{ble} Mr^r Talbot
with the author.

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO

THE EPISCOPAL CLERGY

OF THE

CITY AND DISTRICT OF GLASGOW,

MAY 4, 1842,

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND M. RUSSELL, D. C. L.,

OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD.

SECOND EDITION.

EDINBURGH : OLIVER & BOYD.

GLASGOW : DAVID ROBERTSON.

LONDON : RIVINGTONS.

1842.

Printed by OLIVER & BOYD,
Tweeddale Court, High Street, Edinburgh.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE return of the stated period at which the practice of the church calls for this exercise of official duty on my part, is the only reason why I address you at present; for the circumstances of our body, generally speaking, undergo so little change that the lapse of three years rarely presents any new matter to which your attention requires to be specially directed. At all times the duty of a clergyman is nearly the same; and the motives which should urge him to the performance of it are equally obligatory and unchangeable.

It is true that, were I disposed to pass the bounds which limit the territorial interests of our body, ample scope might be found for dissertation in the movement which has recently taken place, and still continues, in the larger branches of the Episcopal Communion. But in reference to that excitement in the united church of England and Ireland, which has called forth so much talent and zeal on both sides of the question, I might hold it enough to say that we, Scottish Episcopalians, have nothing to do with it; because the circumstances whence it took

its rise have not, at any period, extended to us. This assertion may perhaps require to be explained, especially for the sake of those who, having been educated and ordained elsewhere, are less likely to be acquainted with our history, in the respect, at least, to which I now more particularly allude.

In general, then, I mean to affirm that, owing to her local position and her complete separation from the State, the Episcopal Church in Scotland has been free from the influence of those causes which, in the South, gradually brought the Establishment into such a predicament as almost necessarily led to the reaction which now partially disturbs her repose.

The causes to which I allude may be traced as far back as the Revolution of 1688, when a sovereign ascended the throne, who himself being without any fixed principles in religion, was desirous, for the sake of public peace and other political objects, to unite all parties on a common ground, where the various forms of church government and even of theological opinion were not, compared with the end in view, to be held of primary importance. His intention was to introduce such a scheme of Comprehension as would include all who held, or professed to hold, the fundamental tenets of the gospel, and who might be found willing to sacrifice their peculiar notions of ecclesiastical polity as well as the distinguishing doctrines of the several Divinity schools. In a word, he imagined it quite practicable to unite on the same platform of doctrine, discipline

and worship, the Presbyterian and Episcopalian, the Arminian and the Calvinist.

In pursuance of this object he obtained the aid of some Divines, and, among them, of the celebrated Bishop Burnet, whose work on the Thirty-Nine Articles was not less calculated to remove differences on debated questions, than to establish the faith of the Anglican church on the broad ground of Scripture. You require not to be told that the purpose contemplated by his majesty, though aided by no small portion of learning, was not fully realized; being, in truth, utterly impracticable without the most extensive sacrifice of personal honesty and public faith. But the attempt produced effects which did not pass away with the ruler at whose suggestion it was undertaken. An inroad was thereby made upon the old church-feeling which had distinguished the great divines of the preceding reigns; and a downward progress was commenced from those high principles which supported primitive truth and order, during the discouragements of the Commonwealth, and the more dangerous period of licentiousness and infidelity that succeeded the Restoration. In the reign of Anne, notwithstanding her personal attachment to the ecclesiastical estate, low-church views continued to gain ground. It is true that, under her auspices, Potter wrote his able “Discourse of Church Government;” but the feeling of the age was against him; and the lax notions of Hoadly sank deep into the men of the next gener-

ation, who remembered not the eloquent learning of Jeremy Taylor, the piety of Sanderson, nor the uncompromising orthodoxy of Bishop Bull.

Upon reverting to the annals of last century you will find that its beginning was marked by a great change in the theological literature of England. During the inauspicious administration of Charles the Second, scepticism spread to a great extent among the higher classes ; the evidences of christianity were subjected to a severe examination ; and it had become fashionable for men of wit and literary pretension to indulge in the freest strictures on the doctrines as well as the primitive history of the christian faith. Even some of the philosophers of the period openly professed what was called Deism ; a system of opinions which implied a total disbelief in all revealed religion.

To meet this assault the divine came down from the high places of his creed, and assumed arms similar to those with which he was attacked. Finding himself surrounded by profound reasoners and acute thinkers, by men who had resolved to discard every thing which was incapable of analytical examination and logical proof, he deemed it necessary to cultivate the powers of argument, and to call to his aid all the resources of metaphysics, rhetoric, and natural theology. Hence we find that many writers of eminence at this period who undertook the defence of the christian cause, narrowed very much the limits of the faith, in order that they might main-

tain with success the ground which they deemed it expedient to occupy. The gospel, robbed entirely of its true spirit, of its peculiar energies, and of all its diviner aspects, gradually assumed the appearance of a philosophical system illustrated in the language of scripture. The churchman of that feeble epoch had neither courage nor power to assert the authority and value of the holy mysteries to which he had bound his conscience. Nay, we are assured that a correspondence was maintained between certain prelates who possessed the confidence of government, and some German divines suspected of looking with a favourable eye towards the dogmas of Socinus, to determine whether a doctrinal and ecclesiastical uniformity might not be established among all the protestant churches and sects of Europe. The mere proposal to accomplish such uniformity shows the extent to which either party was disposed to yield; and there is no room for doubt that Archbishop Tillotson acceded not less to the spirit of the times than to the wishes of the sovereign, when he listened to the overtures of the rationalising doctors in Switzerland and Prussia.

The church had now fallen on evil times, and her glory was diminished in the eyes of all orthodox communities. In Jewell, Hooker, and many others, she had possessed a treasure of learning, wisdom, and piety, which on all occasions found utterance in such a rich and fascinating eloquence as to add greatly to its value. These men were so wholly

possessed by their subject, and so entirely devoted to its consideration, that the great truths of divinity were worked into their inmost hearts, and became a part of their very nature. No earthly motive could have induced them to depart from their principles, or to found their preaching and arguments on any other ground than the very highest. But the example and the influence of those great characters passed too soon away ; and with Bull, Taylor, Jackson, and a few others, the older school seemed to expire, or at least to fall into abeyance. For a brief space, indeed, the ancient vigour was partially renewed in Stillingfleet and Waterland ; yet even in them, while there was the same store of learning, the same sound judgment, the same reverence for catholic antiquity, and perhaps the same devotedness to their subject, there were wanting the copiousness of diction, the exuberance, the warmth, and the tenderness which fix the words of Hooker and of Hall in the deepest places of our memory.

An apology has been suggested for the divines who flourished in the earlier portion of the last century by the fact, already stated, that infidelity was so openly avowed by men of genius as to give a new turn to the studies of theological writers. It became their object to defend not the mere outworks, but the citadel itself ; not any particular form of christianity, but the main truths of the gospel, considered as a Divine revelation. They had to combat sophistry with sound reasoning, rather than mistaken

opinions with deep professional learning ; and to this necessity we are indebted for a series of valuable works in reply to the Deists, which retain their reputation and may be read with advantage even at the present day. It is, indeed, to be regretted that such a necessity should ever have existed, for the effect of it was most paralysing and deadly. The perpetual weighing of evidence, the exposure of sophistry, the replying to fallacies founded on abstract principles, is an unfavourable employment for the mind, viewed in reference to the purifying of the heart, and the elevation of pious feeling. The intellect may be improved, but the moral nature is left untouched and uncultivated ; and the hurtful tendency of this species of mental exercitation was but too visible in the writers who attracted the largest share of public notice during the first fifty years after the Revolution.

It is not, as some have insinuated, that those learned men had, to no small extent, ceased to hold the great truths of the gospel. On the contrary, they were not less zealous than able in defending the leading doctrines of revelation ; but it must be confessed that, in replying to philosophers, they frequently forgot that they themselves were divines and christian ministers. Those who are acquainted with the various Lectures founded by Boyle and others, and who have read the elaborate discourses pronounced by Kidder, Gastrell, Harris, Bentley, Samuel Clarke, Bradford, and Blackhall, will un-

derstand what I mean. A school grew up with very peculiar and distinct features. The men who composed it were ingenious, acute, and philosophical, maintaining the low ground on which they stood with remarkable dexterity. Their style, though cold and dry, was clear, and well suited to the character of their dissertations. They moved with great regularity in their contracted orbits, giving a steady light, though neither brilliant nor exhilarating. Moderation was their watchword ; and the principal end of their labours was to find out some middle path between the lofty divinity of the preceding age, and the diluted theology which had been introduced from the Continent. Their maxim too often was to surrender what were considered the less important tenets and usages of their own communion, that they might be able to retain the remainder with greater safety—a maxim which is always dangerous and often impracticable.

If you wish to ascertain what species of fruit grew on the tree I have now described, go back some thirty or forty years, and ask what was the character of clergymen in England, and what were their notions concerning the constitution of the church and the nature of the ministerial office. The venerable Hooker, Bishop Hall, and the learned Leslie, had been succeeded by such writers as Jortin, Balguy, and Powell ; men, no doubt, entitled to respect for their talent and acquirements, but who were so exceedingly lax in their principles

that, while they perpetuated the notions of Hoadly on high doctrinal points, they seemed to teach that any one form of ecclesiastical polity was as good as another, provided it were sanctioned by the civil government. The older divines, the glory of the Anglican church, dwelt with the utmost earnestness on her constitution and the ministerial commission, as necessary for the due possession of the sacraments by the people. They taught plainly that priests are nothing of themselves ; that their value is derived from their office, and from the commission to minister in their Master's name which that office gives to them ; and that human laws can no more make a priest than they can make a sacrament. But when the new school had possession of the church, it was taught that the injunctions of the apostles, and the constant practice of the whole christian world during fifteen hundred years, cannot be of any consequence to us, if we shall be pleased to conclude that a church can subsist without a bishop, and a priest without ordination ; that the State can create ministers of God's word at its own pleasure and after its own fashion, and that such persons are fully qualified to dispense the word of life and the sacraments of the gospel. These low notions were but too common beyond the Tweed at the close of the last century, and have not yet perhaps altogether disappeared. If you desire to know how such miserable degradation could enter into a Communion which had once heard the truth from the great

lights of the seventeenth century, you will find it was let in by that race of low divines, who made it their boast to take what they were pleased to call the common sense view of every question in theology, and treated with derision every one who taught that in the mysteries of the gospel there are things which we can neither touch, taste, nor handle, but which are as necessary to our spiritual life as the air we breathe, and as true as the oracles of God.*

Under the chilling influence of that heartless system where the principles of secular learning had in a great measure supplanted the authority of divine revelation, the church lost her power over the public mind, and had a name to live while in most of her essential attributes she was really dead. Her solemn rites, now little understood and less valued, had sunk into mere formalism ; and the great doctrines on which her foundations were laid were seldom enforced by the priest, and came at length to be reluctantly received by the people, who had been gradually allowed to lose sight of their vast importance.

* See “*Disputatio habita in Scholis Publicis Anno 1756,*” by William Samuel Powell, D.D., late Archdeacon of Colchester, and Master of St John’s College in Cambridge. The theme is as follows : “*Ecclesiastici regiminis, in Anglia et in Scotia constituti, neutra forma aut juri hominum naturali aut verbo Dei repugnat.*” This is to be found in the Discourses published by Doctor T. Balguy, 1776.

The Study of Church History recommended, &c., by Hugh James Rose, B.D., pp. 52, 53. London, 1834.

Hence a great evil arose, to which the present crisis may be distinctly traced, and of which, indeed, it is in some degree the necessary result. About the beginning of the present century, a number of zealous men appeared within the precincts of the church who lamented her inactivity and condemned her want of zeal; and seeing among some classes of the dissenters a more ardent spirit, a deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of their fellow-creatures, and a more honest attachment to their own principles, they attempted to transfer to the Establishment some portion of the living flame to kindle the coal on her altar which no longer gave either light or heat. They encouraged a revival, but too much, unfortunately, in the language of dissent; they laboured to rebuild the temple, but paid too little attention to the original plan or the proper materials; and accordingly there were thousands and tens of thousands who applauded their motives, who yet could not approve their proceedings, and were grieved to see the church outwardly supported by those who slighted her principles and paid small respect to her ritual. In point of fact, the most active persons, during a considerable period, were those who did not glory in the name of churchmen, but who, symbolizing rather with the advocates of dissent, gave their countenance to certain shades of doctrine which could not boast the authority of primitive times. A painful crisis hence arose; the house seemed divided against itself: and while the

priest at every altar announced his belief in the holy catholic church and the communion of saints, there was neither catholicity in doctrine nor unanimity in sentiment.

It was obvious to all that such a state of things could not long continue. Those who had accustomed themselves to mark the progress of events, and to watch the indications of God's Providence, cherished a hope that the evil would in due time correct itself; that though the blood had forsaken its wonted channel and a lethargy had seized the whole body, warmth would return to the cold heart, and distincter views to the erring head. In the moral as well as in the natural world there are always in reserve certain compensating principles which are usually called into action by the very excess which they are calculated by Divine Wisdom to check and adjust; and though for a time, under the influence of human folly, one extreme may produce another, the due balance is at length obtained.

It may have fallen under the notice of some of you that the movement in the South was foreseen by one at least of those who felt that the church could not always persevere in her downward course, but must either resume her essential doctrines or consent to perish. Addressing a brother clergyman he said :—"I seem to think I can tell you something which you who are young may probably live to see, but which I, who shall soon be called away off the stage, shall not. Wherever I go, all about the

country, I see amongst the clergy a number of very amiable and estimable men, many of them much in earnest and wishing to do good. But I have observed one universal want in their teaching : the uniform suppression of one great truth. There is no account given any where, so far as I can see, of the one holy catholic church. I think the causes of this suppression have been mainly two. The church has been kept out of sight partly in consequence of the civil establishment of the branch of it which is in this country, and partly out of false charity to dissent. Now this great truth is an article of the Creed ; and if so, to teach the rest of the Creed to its exclusion, must be to destroy the analogy or proportion of the faith. This cannot be done without the most serious consequences. The doctrine is of the last importance, and the principles it involves of immense power ; and some day not far distant, it will judicially have its reprisals. And whereas the other articles of the Creed seem now to have thrown it into the shade, it will seem, when it is brought forward, to swallow up the rest. We now hear not a breath about the church ; by and by, those who live to see it will hear of nothing else ; and just in proportion, perhaps, to its present suppression, will be its future development. Our confusion now-a-days is chiefly owing to the want of it ; and there will yet be more confusion attending its revival. The effects of it I even dread to contemplate, especially if it come suddenly. And wo betide

those, whoever they are, who shall, in the course of Providence, have to bring it forward. It ought especially of all others to be matter of catechetical teaching and training. The doctrine of the church catholic and the privileges of church-membership cannot be explained from pulpits ; and those who will have to explain it will hardly know where they are, or which way they are to turn themselves. They will be endlessly misunderstood and misinterpreted. There will be one great outcry of popery from one end of the country to the other. It will be thrust upon minds unprepared, and on an uncatechised church. Some will take it up, and admire it as a beautiful picture ; others will be frightened, and run away and reject it ; and all will want a guidance which one hardly knows where they shall find. How the doctrine may be first thrown forward we know not ; but the powers of the world may one day turn their backs upon us, and this will probably lead to those effects I have described.”*

This is a very singular and instructive prediction, and it is most worthy of our notice as coming from the mouth of an old man who had marked as well as read the history of the church, and who, assured of her revival as an ordinance of God, knew that she must return to purity, though not without some

* Dr Pusey’s Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The clergyman here referred to was the late Dr Sikes of Gilsbro’.

reproach, and perhaps much tribulation. But with that state of things, I repeat, we Scottish Episcopalianists have no immediate concern, because we, as a body, were free from the deteriorating causes which operated so unfavourably in the case of the Anglican communion at the Revolution, and during the greater part of the century that followed. Our bishops were not forced into latitudinarianism by the policy of a compromising government who attempted to carry Erastianism even into the doctrines of our most holy faith. Being cast off by the State, we escaped the malign influence to which I have alluded. Our prelates have had amongst them no Hoadly; and our presbyters have never had their zeal cooled or their principles shaken by the plausible sophistry of such men as could consent to enjoy the revenue and dignities of the Establishment, without holding her doctrines or defending her polity. The bishops and priests of our humble body remained entire strangers to the tenets of the new school, and more especially to its lukewarm principles. Our people were taught to look over the heads of such puny divines to the giants of a former age, whose character and whose works will be had in everlasting remembrance. In Scotland, belief in the holy catholic church has not only been professed, together with the other articles of the creed, but the institution itself has been venerated as that ordinance of God, by which and through which the means of grace are conveyed to the faith-

ful, and perpetuated from age to age for the ultimate welfare of the whole human race.

Such being the circumstances of our ecclesiastical body, we are not open to the influence of any temporary movement from without. The waves of that sea which has been put in motion elsewhere do not reach us ; and therefore all insinuations that we have adopted views or admitted impressions from learned persons in another section of the church, are totally without foundation. Such teaching was not needed here : our native clergy required not the light which it is meant to convey ; and our people, generally speaking, had not so far forgotten the instruction received in their youth as to render a revival necessary from any other quarter however respectable. In reference to the insinuations just mentioned, I shall therefore simply remark, that where they have arisen from ignorance they are to a certain extent without guilt ; but where they have had their origin in a design to injure our characters, or blast our prospects in an important undertaking, they deserve, and cannot fail to receive, the reprobation of all upright minds. Such imputations have been circulated in most parts of the country, including, there is reason to believe, our own district ; and it is with the view of obviating the effects of the particular charge to which your attention cannot fail to have been directed, that I have entered at so much length into the theological history of the Episcopal church, in either division of the island, during the last hundred years.

As to the doctrines which have been revived or recommended in the South it becomes me not to give any opinion. Considered simply as principles of the doctrine of Christ, I find not that they have been condemned by any who, by learning and research, have qualified themselves to pronounce a judgment. Some strange opinions have, no doubt, been associated with the elucidation of orthodox views ; and unwise practices, there is reason to fear, have been founded upon them by young men, whose zeal in a new path has greatly exceeded their discretion. A wise and learned head has remarked, that upon the great mass of the people the revival of obsolete usages has the same disadvantageous effect as the introduction of positive novelties ; a truth to which the ardent and inexperienced cannot pay too much attention. But still I am satisfied that, under the overruling providence of God, real and substantial good will result from this apparent evil. The rapidity with which the notions alluded to have spread, and the eagerness with which they have been received in many quarters, where no motives but good ones can be supposed to have operated, show, at least, a consciousness of some defect ; and though, in several instances, dangerous speculations may have been countenanced, and foolish ceremonies introduced, there is no doubt that important conclusions have at the same time been established, which will ultimately lead to clearer views both as to the constitution and the proper authority of the church.

Already I perceive that the chaff begins to be separated from the wheat ; that the dross is cast aside and the precious metal retained ; and in due time, we may piously trust, the evil will altogether disappear and an important benefit remain behind. But neither with the good nor the evil have we, in these parts, any direct concern.

Turning to ourselves, permit me to remind you that we have all along reposed on principle, and sought no other aid. But our attachment to our own doctrines has never rendered us intolerant towards others whose tenets are different, who either have not taken the trouble to examine into our system, or who are disposed to undervalue it because it has not the authority of a legal establishment. On all occasions we have maintained our peculiarities without any wish to infringe on the christian liberty of others, or allowing the remotest grudge to harbour in our minds. Did we not differ from the Presbyterian church in some very essential points, we should have no apology for dissenting from her pale, nor be able to acquit ourselves of the blame of a needless and disgraceful schism. But let us maintain our differences in the spirit of christian affection and esteem, and live, as we have hitherto lived, on terms of friendship with the members of the national communion, joining with them in promoting all objects of benevolence, and all schemes of public utility. Should any of them, in an unguarded moment, attack our principles, or, as is sometimes done, ascribe

to us principles which we do not really hold, let us protect ourselves with reason and calmness ; never imitating the injustice we condemn, nor falling into the intemperance which they themselves at a cooler hour must heartily regret.

If the Episcopal church in Scotland enjoys no protection from the State, farther than is implied in a liberal toleration, neither is she in any degree impeded in the exercise of her discipline, or restricted in her spiritual prerogative, by the pressure of laws emanating from a secular source. In these respects she enjoys all the freedom which belonged to the primitive christians before any of the kingdoms of the world professed to belong to the kingdom of the Redeemer ; following in her laws those principles which she believes to have regulated the government of christian communities in the purest times, and adopting in her administration the maxims which appear to have guided the ministers of Christ, before ambition could awaken in their breasts those less sacred motives which adhere to worldly things.

The form of Episcopacy which exists among us is that which has been properly described as Moderate, and for the attainment of which a great effort was made about two centuries ago. The legislative power is vested alike in the bishops and clergy, the consent of each being held indispensable to the enactment of our canons. The administration of our laws, too, is intrusted to both orders, as represented in the synods annually held, the Diocesan and the

Episcopal. The rights and influence of the Presbyter are as carefully guarded as those of the Bishop ; and the union of the two, acting either separately or together, gives a beauty and a strength to our system which will never be impaired so long as we have confidence in one another—so long as we remember that it is our duty and our interest to be of one mind in the things pertaining to God—and to seek that unity and forbearance which the Blessed Redeemer so strongly recommended to his immediate disciples. Our strength and security rest entirely on principle, warmed and enlightened by confidence and mutual affection ; and the history of the church in these northern parts, will show how effectual such means are to resist the heaviest pressure of external circumstances, the weight of persecution, the frown of power, the alienation of the great, and the contempt of those whose opinions are formed by a regard to mere outward appearance. Principle cannot be destroyed, and it will never die. You may depress a man to the lowest depth of poverty, you may tear his flesh on the rack and give his body to be burned, but you cannot reach the inward part where is lodged the covenant which he has made with his God and with his own soul. He fears not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do ; and hence the last breath of the expiring martyr rises to heaven and becomes a flame which will either enlighten or consume.—No church was ever more tried by adversity

than that to which we belong, and by a species of adversity, too, which sooner exhausts the principle of endurance than a direct persecution pointed against the life. When men are dragged forth to scaffolds and held up as a spectacle to a sympathizing and admiring multitude, a power of reaction is created in the soul which laughs to scorn the weapons of such a warfare, and at the same time forges other weapons which will in due season avenge their cause, and bring back their captivity like rivers in the south. The iron which entered into the soul of the poor Episcopalian during the evil days when penal laws hung over his head, was not taken from the burning fiery furnace : it was rather like that cold and sharp instrument which pierced the heart of the young Hebrew when he lay in the prison of Egypt, suffering at once from forgetfulness, groundless suspicion, and contempt. But the pains and penalties denounced against the Scottish churchmen made no change on their principles nor on their determination to adhere to them ; and hence when the hour of sorrow had passed away they were found unaltered as to their creed, their solemn ritual, and their apostolical constitution. In this issue we cannot fail to perceive the value of a fixed and intelligible principle. Other communions, differently constituted, if they ceased to be held together by the bond of a legal establishment, would fall asunder ; they would separate into numerous sects, and in a short time lose all the characteristics

which now distinguish them. The fate of the puritans in England illustrates what I am now attempting to unfold—the difference between a system founded on a well-defined principle, acknowledged by all and held indispensable by all—and a system which rests merely on local opinion, is supported by a few leaders who succeed in impressing their sentiments on the passing age, and which, having such an origin, cannot be expected to continue long in one stay.

In the circumstances which distinguish the position of our body, our principles, while they are clear and distinct, are most easily reduced to practice; and as our views and motives are the same, so, generally speaking, are our feelings and conduct. With us there can be no such distinction as high-churchman and low-churchman—a distinction perhaps that has no appreciable meaning any where, but which here must be positively absurd. Were we not churchmen, we ought not to be professional members of the Communion to which we belong; and I see not how we can be either more or less.

Being such as we are, and hence necessarily, in point of ritual and ecclesiastical constitution, different from the church by law established in Scotland, we have certain duties to perform and sentiments to cherish in regard to our presbyterian brethren. In return for the toleration which we enjoy and the countenance bestowed upon us by the government of the Empire, we owe to the Establishment

the respect and support which are due to an institution which is sanctioned by the legislature, and by the consent of a large body of the people. Upon this principle the Episcopilians have ever been found to act; and though no other class of dissenters in this country would profit so much as they would, by the withdrawal from the established church of her endowments and honours, yet they have uniformly appeared on the side of her friends; refusing to participate in the designs of those who wish to limit her influence and her means of usefulness. In truth, the principles, I might almost say the prejudices, of the Scottish Episcopalian, are all pointed towards the maintenance of order, subordination, and the supremacy of legitimate power; and therefore, though he may be called to suffer loss, or to endure privations, for the support of national institutions, he is in general found to persevere in his endeavours to uphold what the law of the land has sanctioned. He is a Conservative, not in the narrow acceptation of party nomenclature, but in that broader and more comprehensive sense which embraces national welfare and the permanent advantage of the whole community.

I now take leave, chiefly on account of my less experienced brethren, to make a few remarks on the discharge of certain parts of our duty; more especially the catechising of the young, and the observance of the week-day services, as enjoined by the authority of the church. The former I have always considered

as one of the most interesting labours which belong to our sacred office. To have the stream pure you must begin at the fountain ; and to have a people void of reproach and devoted to their holy calling, you must teach them to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. You have to deal with tender minds, and consequently have the advantage of making the first and deepest impressions upon them ; whereas to preach to a people without principle is, as said an old divine, “ to build where there is no foundation, or rather where there is not so much as ground to build upon.” But, on this head, it is not necessary that I should say more, for the solemn service of yesterday presented the most gratifying proof of your zeal and success. You not only suffer but invite the little children to come unto you for knowledge and direction ; and in this respect the pleasure of the Lord seems to prosper in your hands. Persevere, my dear brethren, and the blessing of the great Head of the church will ever be with you.*

As to the week-day services I feel induced to say a few words, because, for reasons which it is not necessary to detail, this portion of our Communion has not been superintended with the same care as some others, and is consequently less acquainted

* The allusion here is to the solemn rite of confirmation administered the previous day, when two hundred and thirty candidates, exclusively from the city, appeared at the altar.

with her usages. In the district with which my personal residence has more closely connected me, our practice more than thirty years ago was to have one chapel open on Wednesday and Friday throughout the year, the clergy taking the duty in rotation. Of late that practice has been discontinued ; and at present, I believe, there is Divine worship in two chapels on alternate days. But I state not these facts as a positive rule, nor as being in any degree obligatory upon you. My own custom has been to have public prayers on Wednesday and Friday during the solemn season of Lent ; and on every day throughout the year for which the Church has provided an Epistle and Gospel. This practice I wish to be observed in every congregation under my official inspection, because, besides being a dutiful obedience to the law and spirit of the Church, it is attended with many important advantages.

The solemn days to which I allude bear a special reference to the history of our Blessed Lord—to the mystery of his incarnation, his holy nativity and circumcision, his baptism, fasting, and temptation, his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion, his precious death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension, and, finally, the fulfilment of his gracious promise by the coming of the Holy Ghost. The other days turn our thoughts to the labours, the sufferings, the testimony, and the death of those inspired men whom the Redeemer employed to publish his gospel and found his church upon earth.

No subject can be so fruitful in admonition and encouragement. In what the holy apostles did and taught, we see the christian life most beautifully combined with the christian doctrine. His word, in a subordinate and figurative sense, is again made flesh. The virtues and graces which shone in his own person, are reflected in the character and actions of his chosen messengers; and though in their case the standard is lowered and even mixed with some degree of human infirmity, it is not on that account less useful. Nay, to a certain extent, the bright exemplar is rendered more accessible and more suitable to us: its very imperfection makes it more impressive and practical: for if in the very greatest of them we see sin and error—the fall of St Peter, and the persecuting spirit of St Paul—we shall also see a sincere repentance and the renewed heart.

For the first year I would recommend a series of discourses on the days commanded by the church to be kept holy, in remembrance of those great leaders of her noble army of martyrs. The people take a deep interest in such narratives, and derive from the examples thereby set before them the most valuable instruction. It is sometimes urged as an apology by ministers for neglecting such services, that their congregations will not attend: but this defence is wrong both in principle and in fact. If a clergyman is satisfied that the Church commands, his duty is to obey; and my own experience proves

that whenever the pastor leads steadily and conscientiously, his flock will follow him, more especially in observing the holy rites which have been consecrated by the authority of the primitive saints, and by the practice of the great body of believers during nearly eighteen centuries. The most healthy state of a christian community, be assured, is that where the members resort to the sacred assembly to hear God's holy word, to set forth his most worthy praise, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul.

In regard to your method of teaching, it is not necessary that I should say much. It has always appeared to me, that from regard to his own character as a minister of God's word, as well as in deference to the judgment of those whom he addresses, a clergyman ought on all occasions—more especially on public occasions—to write his sermons with care. It is not meant that he shall so slavishly devote himself to his manuscript as not to lift his eyes from it to mark the countenance of his auditors; but simply that he shall have his discourse before him, so that he may not wander into extraneous discussions, violate the analogy of faith, and, which sometimes happens, contradict himself.

In maintaining our own views and doctrines, I farther take leave to recommend to you, as the fruit of some reflection, this important maxim, that the most effectual method for checking the progress of what is false or unsound is to inculcate with zeal and

constancy what is true, rather than by any direct attack on the stronghold of error when defended by those to whom we owe forbearance. We unconsciously do much harm to the cause of christianity, at least in weak minds, by bringing forward objections even when we think ourselves able to refute them ; because the objection remains, so far as to bewilder the imagination, to create a feeling of insecurity, and to throw a stumbling-block in the way which before was plain and easy. So is it with respect to matters of ecclesiastical polity, worship, ceremony, discipline, and other similar points : we succeed best when we simply give the grounds and reasons of our own belief and practice, leaving the conclusions of others entirely out of sight, so far at least as they are questions of controversy and fitted to minister strife. It is better, in short, to store the minds of our people with sound knowledge which cannot be questioned, than to attempt to make our hearers parties to a theological dispute which they cannot fully understand, and which will rather perplex than edify them. I speak, now, solely of our discourses from the pulpit ; for whenever we are induced to appear before the public as authors, we must treat our subjects in an argumentative form, and endeavour to establish the truth upon the ruins of error.

I have left myself little time to enforce the considerations which respect personal character as bearing on professional duty—considerations interesting and

important at all times, but to which I feel that it is only necessary I should simply refer. Allow me then to remark, that the most impressive lesson that is ever given by one human being to another is conveyed in the form of example ; and to this duty we all bound ourselves by a solemn promise in the presence of God when we devoted our lives to the service of his church. True it is, we are but earthen vessels, men of like passions with others, liable to be misled by wrong views, and even by those which are right if unduly followed out. But let us never forget the words addressed by our Blessed Lord to his disciples when preparing them for their great task of evangelizing the world, wherein they were commanded to make their light so shine before men, that others, informed and stimulated by their example, might glorify the great Father in heaven. He said to his chosen servants, “ ye are the salt of the earth ; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.” Is it not a beautiful and instructive metaphor by which our Lord sets forth his church and her ministers under the likeness of that penetrating principle which prevents corruption and decay in all organized substances ? From his expression we are led to infer that the gospel, when properly administered, acts upon the great body of society as salt acts upon animal and vegetable matter, counteracting the natural tend-

ency to dissolution, and preserving it in purity and soundness. For this gracious purpose our Redeemer sent forth his apostles, and he continues to send forth others into the world with a commission to admonish, reprove, and instruct ; to infuse a living principle into those who are dead in trespasses and sins ; to sanctify the unholy mass ; to cure the distempered soul ; to cleanse the moral leper ; and to spread over the surface of society the fair aspect of purity and health. But if this purifying principle shall itself become impure ; if this active principle of life shall itself become morbid ; if this sanctifying influence shall itself become unholy ; in one word, if the salt shall have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? Alas ! the healing virtue cannot be restored ; the holy influence cannot be brought back ; the quenched light cannot be rekindled ; the savour is gone, and the insipid residue is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of man. No balm from Gilead can supply its place, nor can the frankincense of Arabia compensate for its loss ; the spirit of life and purity has fled, and only a corrupt and corrupting carcass remains behind, spreading around it contagion and disgust.

And let me appeal to your experience of the world, and ask if it is not so ? What is there in human society so loathsome and so much contemned as a demoralized clergyman—a man who has broken his vows to his God, to his Redeemer, and to his fellow-

creatures ; a man whom neither heaven nor earth could restrain, who preached to others and consented that he himself should be a castaway ; who inculcated a faith which had no hold on his own heart, who spake of a judgment to come that he himself believed not ; and described an eternity of weal or wo in words he did not feel, and which never influenced his own conduct ? The curse denounced by the Divine Head of the Church falls heavily on that man, and so crushes him that there is hardly any hope that he will ever rise again to respectability or usefulness. The salt has lost its savour, and it is trodden under foot of men.

The words of our Blessed Lord are full of meaning, and convey to us solemn warning and admonition ; reminding us of our frailty, of the great trust committed to our charge, and of the dreadful penalty with which the prostitution of our high office will be visited. But, for our comfort, let us remember that every penalty implies a reward, and every threatening implies a promise ; and hence the same scripture which delineates the suffering of the unfaithful servant, speaks also of those who, having been faithful to the trust reposed in them, are called to share the joy of their Lord. At the great and dreadful day those who sleep in the dust of death shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness, as the

stars for ever and ever. That this great and endless blessing may follow the labours of every individual here present, may the good God and our Saviour the great shepherd of the sheep, grant of his infinite mercy.

THE END.





